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Musings on a Master Composer

T. S. PARTHASARATHY

SYLVAN BEAUTY

THE spate of music in Madras towards the close of December 1978 must have convinced any lover of music that, despite many new composers appearing on the horizon and attempts made to popularize their songs, the kritis of Tyagaraja still remain the backbone of our music performances. Behind a variety of mutilations committed by musicians, partly through lack of attention to sahitya and partly through wilful tampering with authentic tunes, one could still discern the delicate and ethereal beauty of his musical forms like the fragrance of a distant rose wafted by the breeze.

Even the straggling modern buildings, garishly painted, have not spoiled the quiet beauty of Tiruvaiyaru. A century and a half ago the village should have been a sylvan spot of great charm. Tyagaraja himself has waxed poetic over his native village in two kritis 'Sari vedalina' in Asaveri and 'Muripemu' in Mukhari and has described the natural beauties around it with a rapture bordering on parochial pride. The former piece is devoted to a description of the river Kaveri as it comes flowing from Srirangam while the latter, in which there is more poetry than song, portrays the many excellences of Chola Desa in general and of Tiruvaiyaru in particular. But in Tyagaraja's time, it was a citadel of orthodoxy which looked upon musicians with an unfriendly eye and bracketed the singer with the dancer and the gallant (*nata, vita and gayaka*).

NEW VISTAS

It is no wonder that a great number of musicians, who participated in the music season at Madras, reassembled at the sanctuary of music at Tiruvaiyaru where the creator of those forms lies in *samadhi*. The 132nd *aradhana* celebrations of Saint Tyagaraja were inaugurated on January 17th by Smt. D. K. Pattammal, the much-respected doyen of Karnatic music. The excellent arrangements made for the five-day music festival by Balamurali Krishna and Sirkazhi Govindarajan, Secretaries of the Tyagabrahma Mahotsava Sabha, were warmly praised by all who benefitted by them. The facilities provided included a post office, a bank, book shops and restaurants. A Foreign musicologist present at Tiruvaiyaru remarked that the *aradhana* was "the most magnificent homage paid to a music composer in any part of the world."

Among the numerous composers of Karnatic music it was Tyagaraja who exerted the greatest influence upon musical art in South India and revolutionized its very nature. His songs are accepted today as the only adequate interpretation of classical Karnatic music from both the music and the sahitya points of view. His advent marks an epoch in the development of our musical history, his compositions opening, as they did, new vistas of precious possibilities in the art which lay dormant till his time. His devotion to

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the tradition of the past was matched only by his refreshingly fresh innovations in new fields. In sheer excellence he surpassed all that had preceded. From about the middle of the 19th century Tyagaraja begins to dominate the repertoire of our musicians and the preference of listeners as no other composer of the past had done.

THE PERICLEAN AGE

Tyagaraja commenced his career as a composer in an environment that was remarkably rich in the field of music. It was the Periclean age of Karnatic music. Veterans like Virabhadrayya, whom Subbarama Dikshitar describes as the "builder of modern Karnatic music", had already set up conventions and standards for its systematic presentation. Tyagaraja's formidable contemporaries included Pachimiriam Adippiah, Pallavi Gopalayyar and Vina Perumalayya, not to speak of Dikshitar and Syama Sastri, all of whom had proved their mettle as performing musicians and composers. It was in the midst of such giants that Tyagaraja made his grade as a composer.

MASTER OF THE KRITI

Even as a teenager Tyagaraja had been fully exposed to the techniques and devices used by the great creative artists of the past and of his own era. He had all the materials before him but his genius lay in the way he organized it for his purposes and conjured up a world of celestial beauty and light. He built a musical edifice with only one kind of brick viz., the kriti. He did not compose *varnams*, *swarajatis*, *padams* or *ragamalikas* but concentrated on the kriti for which he himself spelt out the grammar in the Kriti 'Sogasuga'. The

kriti form seems to have been awaiting his coming. The greatness of his art lay in producing something utterly new and captivating from ragas and talas used over and over again. He had an unerring musical instinct which led him to choose the appropriate raga and tala and the mould in which he should cast a particular composition.

It is but natural that his life's work should have passed through its phases of trial, experiment and fulfilment. At their mature best, his kritis are of unparalleled excellence. But some kritis like 'Anupama gunambudhi' in Athana and 'Rama nannu brova' in Harikambhoji are said to be compositions of his nonage. From simple Divyanama melodies like 'Namo namo Raghavaya' in Desya Todi, he must have quickly passed on to his masterpieces in the major ragas and his sparkling gems in *apuvra* ragas. Tyagaraja it was who breathed life into Kharaharapriya and Harikambhoji. Some of his kritis in *janya* ragas are more beautiful than those in the respective *karta* ragas. He has composed in about 220 ragas falling under 30 melakartas although, for some strange reason, there are no pieces in ragas like Simhendramadhyamam, Padi and Dvija-vanti.

THE FIVE GEMS

His *pancha ratna* kritis in the five *ghana* ragas, which are being sung at his *aradhana* celebrations everywhere, stand in a class by themselves and being the only examples of that genre, they defy classification. They are the most representative of his art as a composer and one may even aver that Tyagaraja has, in these pieces, consciously projected his genius in a quins tessential form. They are not stray piece-

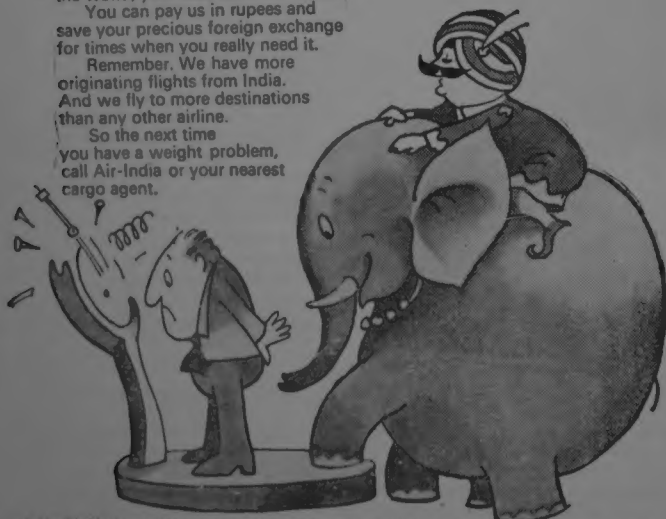
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composed on the spur of the moment but reveal an enchanting and deliberate scheme of melody, rhythm and words into which he has painstakingly fitted in every aspect of the classical form of Karnatic music. Musically speaking, they are highly sophisticated compositions in which the ragas are developed step by step in their natural progression, culminating in a grand finale at the end. The *ritugada swaras* come in waves with a breathtaking originality and daring. All the five are in the Adi tala but Tyagaraja has varied the tempo in different ways to suit the mood of each song. The sarva laghu dances equally merrily in the brisk Arabhi song 'Sadhinchene' as in the sedate Sriraga piece 'Endaro'.

FUND OF CREATIVITY

He deals with major ragas like Todi and Sankarabharanam with incredible fertility of imagination and portrays their many facets. It is almost a challenge to attempt 30 kritis in a common raga like Todi without repeating the music, using seven talas viz. Adi, Desadi, Chapu, Tisra Laghu, Rupakam, Tripura and Khanda Chapu. There are 28 songs in Sankarabharanam in different talas and *eduppus*. All the 675 songs of Tyagaraja so far traced are as many melody types with different *eduppus*. Some of the *sangatis* now found in his kritis like 'Dorakuna' and 'Najivadhara' in Bilahari and 'Darini telusukunti' in Suddha Saveri might have been added by later musicians but the fact remains that Tyagaraja, unlike Dikshitar, had, in structuring his kritis, anticipated such an event. If Dikshitar gave body and shape to the music of a past era, Tyagaraja looked ahead with a prophetic vision and provided for the future development of Karnatic music.

This is borne out by the fact that most composers of the post-Tyagaraja period like Patnam Subrahmanya Iyer closely followed his footsteps and further enriched our music.

INNOVATION: SANGATIS

The kritis of Tyagaraja are primarily based on the aesthetics of vocal music but many of them lend themselves to being played equally effectively on instruments. They have been the mainstay of the flute, nagaswaram, vina and even band players ever since his time. He could adorn the Pallavi, Anupallavi and Charana with *sangatis* in a continuous and unalterable development of sequences like 'Koluva-mare gada'. He however incorporated in his kritis the features of the other musical forms of his time. The rhythmic gait of a Varna is found in the kriti 'Koluva' in Bhairavi, even as 'Najivadhara' in Bilahari recalls a varnam in double speed. 'Uraka galguna' in Sahana sounds like a padam and 'Emani veginthune' in Huseni might well have been a model for later Javali composers.

NEW RAGAS

Tyagaraja followed the 'Sangraha Chudamani' of Govinda and composed in more than a hundred *janya* ragas described in the work as Dikshitar did in the raganga ragas of Venkatamakhhi. But unlike Dikshitar, Tyagaraja himself created new ragas and composed sparkling pieces in them. A single kriti by him like 'Durmarga chara' in Ranjani or 'Manavalakincha' in Nalinakanti depicts the soul of the raga so well that later vidwans could develop a full-fledged raga alapana of such ragas and sing lively kalpana

swaras. Yet, it is strange that dozens of the composer's kritis in well known ragas remain untouched by musicians.

Some of the most exquisite melodies ever composed by Tyagaraja are to be found among his Utsava Sampradaya Kirtanas. As these pieces were mainly intended to be sung by him during the daily worship he conducted, the saint appears to have been fully in his element while composing them and the result has been a unique blending of melody, rhythm and sahitya.

YAKSHAGANAS

We see quite a different image of Tyagaraja in his two yakshaganas, 'Prah-lada Bhakti Vijayam' and 'Nauka Charitram', in which he adopts a different musical style for the songs, employing only the minimum number of sangatis and laying emphasis on their emotional content. It may be news to many that the saintly Tyagaraja was fully conversant with the padas of Kshetrajna and has gone to the extent of incorporating some lines from a pada in his kriti 'Enta papihaiti' in Gaullipannu. He freely uses Kshetrajna's imagery in his lively songs in the 'Nauka Charitram'.

FLUID RHYTHM

It is commonly believed that the kritis of Syama Sastri excel those of the others

in their *tala* aspect. A scrutiny of the songs of Tyagaraja will reveal that he was no less a master of rhythm. It is perhaps only his kritis that do not confound or mystify the listener about their *tala* structure once the pallavi is commenced. The presence of the 'sarva laghu' or the natural flow of the rhythmic sense is the outstanding quality of Tyagaraja's compositions. Tyagaraja's treatment of *tala* is smooth and free from constraint. He was also the first great composer to write kritis in the Desadi and Madhyadi talas which are a recent induction into Karnatic music. 'Enta vedukundu' (Sarasvati manohari), 'Bhuvini dasudane' (Sriranjani) are typical compositions in Desadi *tala*. 'Nama kusuma' (Sriraga), 'Meru samana' (Mayamalavagaula) and 'Enduku nirdaya' (Harikambhoji) are examples of compositions in the Madhyadi *tala*.

But in certain kritis like 'Kalinarulaku' (Kuntalavarali) and 'Nanu palimpa' (Mohanam), the *tala* appears to be Desadi. When sung in Adi, the last half avarta of the pallavi has to be filled up by *akaara* or a long sangati as is the fashion these days.

Posterity can never be sufficiently grateful to Tyagaraja who, as one writer has most aptly pointed out, "is perhaps our greatest single contribution to humanity".



"Pancharatna" of Sri Thyagaraja

BY

S. PARTHASARATHY

ALTHOUGH the term "Pancharatna" has come to be loosely used to denote even a group of five kritis on some of the Kshetras visited by Sri Tyagaraja, it specifically refers to the five compositions of his in the five *ghana* ragas, Nata, Gowla, Arabhi, Varali and Sri. Apart from the fact that they come under this single group of ragas in which *tana* is rendered traditionally, structurally also they are different from the other kritis of this composer.

Although there seems to be no clear connection between the *aradhana* and these Pancharatna pieces, these have by custom come to be sung at the *samathi* on the occasion of the *aradhana*. "Jagadananda Karaka" (Nata), "Dudukugala" (Gowla), "Saadhinchene" (Arabhi), "Kanakanaruchira" (Varali) and "Endaromahanubhavulu" (Sri) have thus gained popularity. Of these the Nata, Arabhi and Sri Raga pieces are better known, the other two being comparatively less known. In fact, very few have really learnt the Varali piece. There have been some, including Vidwans, who have declared that this is not Tyagaraja's. A few said that only the Pallavi and Anupallavi were composed by him and the Charanas were later additions by some others. Strangely, those who made these assertions have published this kriti in their books! There is, however, no doubt that all the five have come down to us through more than one *sishya varga*.

VARNA FORMAT

One can see that these pieces are in the form of *varnas*, with a pallavi, anupallavi

and charanas with "Ethukadai" *swara-sahitya*. While the Arabhi kriti carries the "Ethukadai" based on the charana line "Samayaniki", the other four "ethukadai" *swara-sahityas* rest on the pallavi of the pieces. They are thus so many charanas to the compositions. The Arabhi kriti which also has an *anubandha* at the end, thus resembles a *varna* to a very great extent.

One basic thing common to all the five is that they follow the pattern of *tana* singing. While all the kritis are in *Adi tala*, the Sri raga piece alone has the peculiar and rare "eduppu" (beginning) in the little finger. The others start with the *tala* ("Sama eduppu"). The Nata piece is completely in Sanskrit, but the rest are in Telugu, which of course takes in several Sanskrit expressions. All the five are beautiful creations in the respective ragas and the raga development is discernible.

CORRECT MODE OF RENDERING

Having learnt these from the late Dr. T. Srinivasaraghavan, a descendant of the Tillaisthanam disciple of Tyagaraja, my statements are naturally based on this tradition. The Pancha Ratna versions he used to render were the Wallajapet versions, according to him. He was one of those anxious to find the oneness of the original version in all schools. In fact he had proved to me with personal witnesses how certain Kritis were sung in the same way by others including the Umayalpuram *sishya varga*.

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Taking Nata, it is relevant to point out that this raga as sung today eschews the *dhaivata* completely. The accepted *lakshana* of this raga is *sa ri ga ma pa dha ni sa—sa ni pa ma ri sa*. This is fully in evidence in our version of "Jagadananda". The graded *sangathis* in the *pallavi* are beautiful and artistic.

VARIATIONS

One important variation in our version is the order of the ten Charanas. The order is: "Indra Neela Mani", "Padavijita", "Purana Purusha", "Srushti sthithyantakara", "Sajjanamanasa", "Karadhruta", "Nigama Neeraja", "Omkara panjarakeera", "Amaratharaka", "Aganithaguna". "Amaratharaka", unlike the popular version, goes up to the *tara sthayi*. One of the two kritis of Thyagaraja in Nata, "Jagadananda" describes the Supreme Being's qualities, the *Sanskrit* and the raga adding to the charm of the piece. Our version also has the Thyagaraja *mudra* in four charanas, the third, sixth, ninth and tenth.

"Dudukugala" is the only kriti of Thyagaraja in "Gowla" raga. It is the outpouring of a repentant man who makes a downright confession of all his sins to Rama and craves His forgiveness. In the *sangathis* of the *pallavi* as well as in the charanas, one gets a complete artistic picture of the raga.

UNIQUE PIECES

There are several kritis of Thyagaraja in "Arabhi" raga, but "Saadhinchene" has a shape and movement different from those of the others. It is in praise of the

Lord, but in what is known as "Ninda sthuthi". Our version has an additional charana as number 4. It is:

"Saracharudu Sanaka sanandana
Sannamapreyudu Sakaladharudu"

Except the Alathur Brothers, I have not heard anyone else sing this Charana. There are two Charanas with the *mudra* "Thyagaraja", of which one comes as an "anubandha" at the end.

Varali has also been utilised by Thyagaraja in several kritis. But the pride of place must go to "Kana Kana Ruchira". It enlarges the theme "The more I see you the more I crave to see you", giving a list of numerous *bhaktas* who had enjoyed the vision of Divinity in various ways. This piece also has an "anubandha" as the last Charana. Varali and Nata are the two *vivadi mela* ragas in this group of five. This reminds me of the sensible piece of advice of my guru who would insist on saying that the *vivadi* swaras have to be handled with care. Imparting any gamaka movement to them will upset the entire raga.

The last of the series is in the *mangala* raga "Sri". Thyagaraja pays homage to the numerous great personalities who had dedicated themselves to the service of God. A song which produces an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity, this kriti is a unique creation.

LEARNING THE CORRECT WAY

These five gems, each great in its own way, have to be learnt intensively, to be rendered effectively. They can be sung in a group only if rehearsed well enough.

The rendering of these at the *sanadhi* has unfortunately been going down in quality year by year. It was shocking to see two vidwans trying to read them from a note-book this year!

There are reports of the actual occasions when Tyagaraja composed these pieces. To one who preferred service to Rama to wealth and poured forth *sangita*

from his heart, it mattered little what others around him thought of him. There are references in his own *kritis* which seem to indicate that he was a messenger of God sent down to the earth to preach the gospel of *sangita* as a means to liberation. Our duty is to learn and study his *kritis* with earnestness and devotion from sources close to authenticity and pass them on to posterity unadulterated.



SRI TYAGARAJA

"The force of a mighty and soulful personality breathing through every song, the intense religious fervour, the irresistible appeal of the sentiment of divine love and tender pathos, the inimitable charm of poetic diction and thoughts of limitless suggestion, the matchless beauty of music true to nature and daring in invention and as captivating to a child as to the sophisticated savant, the triple confluence of *bhava*, *raga*, and *tala* into a single flood of rapturous music, the element of delightful surprise with which the *sangitis* are developed in perfect harmony with the varied implications of *bhava*, the reflection of every kind of experience common to mankind, clear presentation in brief compass of the teachings of scriptures, commendation of music as divine art easily capable of yielding the ultimate bliss, the supreme message exhorting mankind to earn the grace of God by love and service, have all contributed to make his songs unsurpassed

as treasures of the finest music, poetry, religion, ethics and philosophy."

* * *

"The overmastering interest in the richness of his melody too often tends to obscure the rhythmic aspects of his songs. The popularity of his compositions is due in great part to the perfect naturalness, extreme simplicity and rich varieties of his rhythms. Unlike other composers he used *adi tala* in abundance and *triputa*, *rupaka*, *jhampa* and *chapu* to a lesser extent. It is not the number of *talas*, but variations of *eduppu*, *kala* and *jati* in familiar *talas* that have endowed his song with lively spirit and inborn grace seldom equalled in the pieces of other composers. In tempo and movement with all the subtleties and complexities of natural changes, the songs of Tyagaraja thrill and seem to beat in true consonance with the mysterious stir within ourselves."

—[Studies in Indian Music by
T.V. Subba Rao]



The Uneasy Spectrum

By
M. R. S.

The philosophical foundation of music, it is said, consists in the realisation of its immortal soul. Pointing out in anguish that commercial exploitation of this divine art has blighted the taste and temperament of the artistes and the public alike, the cognoscenti plead for rescuing it from degradation. Obviously very much more than an expression of a pious platitude.

It would seem futile to interest ourselves in historical conjectures in the hope of discovering a talisman that would resuscitate Karnatic music. At the same time, it might not be correct to rely on the contrary view voiced by some, especially the professional musicians, that our music has in fact developed exceedingly well both qualitatively and otherwise in the past many decades. There can be honest differences in the conceptual cognisance of what constitutes development.

People musing over the proverbial yesterday are by and large only those who had experienced the graces of music from without. They have not had that self-involvement which the performing musicians have had. To this extent, the formers' evaluation might seem to suffer in authenticity, technically speaking.

ON THE WANE?

There is, however, a measuring rod. The music of easy virtues is a phenomenon of recent times and has such devouring and devastating impact on the impressionable segments of society that the higher values have all but steadily been elbowed out.

Madras is reputed to be the cultural capital of this great country. If culture comprises only dramas and cinema we, have no doubt a surfeit of it. A random look into the *Hindu's* engagements columns show a dismal picture in regard to engagements of classical music concerts in the city. One may not, therefore, be on unsure grounds to say that Karnatak music has been losing its charm and is on its wane at least in its power of drawing audiences.

REASONS

The causes for this state of affairs may be one or more of the following:

(a) Music originally evolved as a form of yoga, an aid to spiritual communion with God or a means to attainment of the Ultimate. These theological and metaphysical approaches gave way, as in every other field, to rational, down-to-earth, empirical positivistic attitudes whereby the 'pay-off' element in terms of mundane tangible benefits began to receive preponderant consideration. The Kings and the Zamindars lured even the first-rate musicians to sing their praise or to their dictation. The sacred tended to become mercenary.

(b) Music was the preserve of certain 'pockets' in the yester-years and, so, was rich in depth and denouement. Its diffusion later on a staggeringly large scale has brought in its wake adaptations in standards.

(c) I have heard it said that the 'Gurus' in the past, in many cases, have not been quite generous in imparting all

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they knew to their disciples. What was learnt was in piecemeal fashion. Naturally, at each successive stage of handing down, there was a gradual diminution in content and vitality. The post-Thyagaraja period is yet to produce a musician with enough gifts of grace and charisma to reclaim what might have been lost.

(d) Music has become a calling, a means of livelihood. The musicians stand alienated from music, as a disgruntled factory worker is from the product of his labour. There has been a perceptible drive towards compulsive compromises.

THE OTHER SIDE

While these are possible causes for the disenchantment of the people over classical music, I am not unaware of an argument running somewhat as under:

Classical music is a superior art-cum-science requiring a high degree of intellectual involvement on the part of the audience too. In every age and every society, the intellectuals have always been fewer in number. The progress of music is not, therefore, to be judged in terms of quantitative yardsticks.

This contention may not be wholly untenable. What we are concerned with, however, is the dilution in quality and its consequences.

Remedial measures: Auguste Comte, the celebrated French thinker, enunciated a theory that evolution of sciences follows a hierarchical pattern based on increasing complexity and decreasing generality. Extending the principle to arts, I daresay, music occupies a prime place amongst the scientific arts. It is easier to highlight a 'problem' than to find a solution therefor. The vaster its dimensions, the greater the constraints. Even so, our attention can be focussed on certain specific aspects.

Responsibility of the State: A nation requires, for its well-being in the respective spheres, the Defence Forces, the police, the judiciary, the economic, educational and other institutions. Similarly, it needs an elaborate cultural machinery to keep the standards aloft. A wide network of autonomous institutions catering to the different branches of arts, all looked after by the Government with the same vigilance as the other wings of the administration, should come into being without loss of time. These should be placed beyond the pale of the politicals. Musicians should not have to depend on private personal philanthropy or patronage. Individual excellences should have free scope. Research should be encouraged and financed by the state in a big way. A cultural bulwark of this kind can be an insurance against depravity.

Responsibility of Society: (i) Society has to be educated to realise that they should expect no special thanks to stand by the musicians; for, they serve themselves by serving the musicians.

(ii) The emergence of music Sabhas and other organisations having the generic description has largely secularised classical music with the result that the emotive and devotional content is conspicuous by its absence. In tune with the concept of 'adoption' these days, as for instance of an educational institution adopting a village for its uplift, the music sabhas may 'adopt' a temple and/or an educational institution (a University/College/School), each according to its standing, and arrange for at least one of their concerts each month being held in the 'adopted' institution, thrown open free to all. As an alternative, the Sabhas may also choose a different temple or educational institution in different months for the purpose, with proper co-ordination.

At present, only a few well-placed temples organise concerts on occasions of annual festivals and not every month through the year. The frequency of concerts could be increased.

Responsibility of the musicians: (i) Any art or Science can grow only if the artists or the scientists contribute to gathering up of knowledge in the respective fields. Every professional musician should consider it a sacred duty to widen the horizons of his or her knowledge. Resting on laurels is a pathological condition. Titles and degrees do not make one a musician. A performing musician is on trial at every concert, no matter how senior he is. A true artist's life is characterised by an unquenchable thirst for acquiring more and more knowledge and an assiduous 'Saadhakam'.

(ii) The more prosperous among the musicians should offer in a generous measure to give as many free performances as possible in temples and educational institutions. These provide the potential

areas for enlarging the music fraternity. It is time the musicians recognised the symbiotic relationships between them and the society.

(iii) Musicians will do well to desist from confining their musical fare to a limited set of certain selected ragas and compositions in every concert, even when it means displeasing those who count. They should not delude themselves into believing that the public are capable of appreciating only some hackneyed stuff. The public do have an amazing receptivity to any or every raga or composition that abounds in life and loveliness, the two properties which the musician has to endow his concert with.

Music reviews/Critiques: The kind of criticism that exudes deep insight into the finer values, a well-informed cultivated comprehension of nuances and a fair understanding of at least the elements of the grammar of music will alone merit the attention of the Vidvans and rasikas. All else is a waste of time and newsprint.



MUSIC & EMOTION

"The assumption that music expresses emotion has by no means been universally accepted by philosophers. On the contrary, Harold Osborne, for example, attacks it vigorously in his book *Aesthetics and Criticism*. 'One man', he says, 'describes a piece of music as 'gay' and another finds the same piece 'melancholy'; one calls it 'heroic' and another 'tender'..... the differences between them are not due to poverty of the language'—which "is adequate to show that they do genuinely differ"..... "There is nothing intrinsically impossible in supposing that music should provide a more delicate and exact system for symbolizing the subtleties of affective life than the very crude instrument afforded by verbal language..... But the supposition breaks down on facts. For in order to be effective as symbolization music, or any other system of symbols, would have to signify the same thing for everyone—or at any rate to all those people who were able to use it for the purpose of symbolic communication..... There has been experimentation in the last hundred years directed to showing that this is indeed the case with music; but the results of experiment have consistently shown the opposite".

"Musical compositions do not represent or symbolize anything other than themselves. They neither mediate nor suggest any experiences apart from those aural occurrences which are the compositions."

"In instrumental music there is no represented emotional content, no element of 'life' emotion; there is only the aesthetic emotion directly aroused in you by the pattern and structure of musical sound which is the music."

—*Adventure in Music* By R.W.S. MENDL.

Dr. Balamurali Krishna's

Presidential Address at the 52nd Annual Conference of the Music Academy, Madras
held on 21—12—1978

I deem it a great honour to have been considered worthy by the Experts' Committee to be chosen as President of this, the 52nd Conference of the Music Academy. I am deeply conscious of the awe-inspiring line-up of great exponents of Carnatic music on whom this unique honour has been conferred in yester years. I myself have been undoubtedly, along with several of you, a reverent and keen listener to the eloquent words of sagacity and wisdom that have marked the Presidential addresses of my worthy predecessors. Most of them had been conferred this great honour in the twilight of their long and illustrious career. This had enabled them to recount the glories of the golden age of Carnatic music, which, in the opinion of many, is fading, and to extoll the glories of ancient systems of learning and tradition in musical performance. I have the dubious honour of being a relatively young recipient of the honour even though I am in a position to look back over forty years of my career as a performing artist and to share with you the lessons that I feel worthy of learning from this long experience.

THE FUTURE

I feel particularly pleased to look ahead to the future and to share with you some of my reflections on where Carnatic music is heading in the next few years. In this exercise, I am undoubtedly fettered by the deep roots in tradition that my long years of association with Carnatic music has bound me with but at the same time my somewhat inquisitive and explo-

ratory mind prevents my getting bogged down in the quagmire of the 'old is gold' syndrome. May I therefore crave the indulgence of all of you in this, my essay into the unravelled and unexplored vistas of Carnatic music.

CHANGE INEVITABLE

No doubt, tradition is the basis of all human achievements. But the music should not become a museum piece by rigidly adhering to tradition alone. Tradition is the very substance from which one creates and progresses; but traditionalism is a barrier placed on progress in the name of what is obsolete. Change is however inevitable whether one likes it or not. Without invention there cannot be progress and therefore a judicious interplay of tradition and invention are necessary to develop good music. It is well known that the existing tradition of our Carnatic music is only the sampradaya of the recent past. One cannot sing or play as it was sung or played some 100 years ago or even fifty years back. Thus the concept of tradition is a dynamic factor. Though tradition and change are opposite factors, the change is more powerful and influences tradition to change with the ages.

The basic concept of music may be said to be "Vamsabhivruddhi". 'Vamsa' is bamboo which has many branches and ever evolving and developing. Perhaps this may be the reason to picture Lord Sri Krishna with Vamsee the flute, to signify that evolution and development in music is a continuous process. The word tradition itself may be humorously

defined as Tree + addition → Tradition → a tree with many additional branches.

THREE GROUPS

Today in the field of music, there are principally three groups:—

1. Performers of the present day.
2. Performers who call themselves traditionalists.
3. Musicologists.

Musicologists are concerned mainly with finding out theories and collecting valuable information about the history of music. The performers who call themselves traditionalists believe only in the music of the past generation. They face, a critical dilemma—an inability to cope up with the present day tendencies in music and incapacity to go back to the past generation. Present day performers are exposed to the criticisms of the traditionalists but supported more by the public. It would give great pleasure for the present day artists if the traditionalists change their attitude and come forward to appreciate anything that is good in the performers of today. Anything outside the beaten track should not be frowned upon by traditionalists as not conforming to sampradaya and hide-bound tradition. Were the great past masters of Carnatic music the late Sri Ariyakkudi Ramanuja Iyengar and late Sri Maharajapuram Nannayana Iyer etc., singing alike? Which tradition were they following? The tradition is only the style of Carnatic music. Each artist is presenting the music in his or her own style and this individuality establishes a style for every performer. The creative musician nurtures the growth of music in all dimensions by adding new elements to the art. The great art comes mostly from non-conformists.

INDIVIDUALITY

The general audience for classical music has greatly increased which is a welcome change but this has brought with it a number of problems and responsibilities for the performing artists. The integrity of the art should be well guarded by the artist. The performers are called upon to sing or play in a number of different situations with different types of audience in addition to regular concerts. This environment tempts the young artists to develop their own style of performing before reaching the stage of musical maturity. The creation and innovation of the artists should never be at the cost of abandoning our great musical tradition; they should be within the framework of the style of Carnatic music. The young musician should not, as it often happens, copy either his own teacher or any other famous artist. The individuality should be developed which is in essence a re-integrating process. This is the invaluable advice given by my esteemed Guru Late "Gayakasavabhooma" Sri Parupalli Ramakrishnaya Pantulu. From what one learns from his Guru, one should with his own intelligence and hardwork make a synthesis into something new. He must either consummate a tradition or initiate another, either do what has already been done in a better way or do something entirely new. There is no short cut for achieving greatness or fame in any art, and it is a very slow and difficult process which demands first of all proper training, intelligence and above all a long and sustained endeavour.

BETTER AUDIENCES

Nowadays, the general musical knowledge of the public has very much improved and very few listeners can be

hoodwinked by the musician performing mere acrobatics. Where there were 100 Vidwans trained in Gurukula tradition, there are 500 to-day who have successfully come out from conservatories. Most of the young artists of today are performing in an above average level and so to attain name and fame, one is compelled to improve one's technical brilliance and the art of presentation to a great extent to face the modern situation. The artists are also more subject to praise as well as criticism to the popularity of the listening public. There is a tendency now in Rasikas to support and boost a particular artist to the highest pedestal and condemn the rest of the artists by criticising them very adversely. This unhealthy attitude of the Rasikas should be completely erased by the artists alone by discouraging this attitude of their Rasikas. The artists themselves should learn to respect and appreciate their colleagues. The criticisms are necessary but should always be for constructive purposes.

CONSERVATORIES

The merits of the time-honoured Gurukula system can never be challenged but since the times are changing, it is difficult to meet the demands of the public and so music conservatories have a great responsibility to train the students of music in a proper way. The syllabus, methods of teaching, examination and evaluation systems of the present day need modification. After the successful completion of the course in a conservatory, the person should decide whether he prefers to become a performing artist or a musicologist. According to his preference, he should specialise at least for five years under an able Guru to understand the techniques of presentation and interpretation of music which is something

more than merely learning the technicalities of music if he wants to be a performing artist; and if one likes to be a musicologist, he can pursue his studies further and do research under able guidance in a conservatory.

New experiments may be conducted in Carnatic music by musicologists as well as by musicians provided the experiments neither change or affect the nature of Carnatic music. Innumerable new ragas, the 'Jawab-Sawal' which is a dialogue between the artist and the accompanists, the violin and the mridangam in Swarakalpana. I took some initiative in this line; it is followed today by both South Indian and North Indian artists in their performances. Pallavis in complicated talas and last but not least the orchestral music in Carnatic music, can be experimented successfully. Here I wish to express my sincere thanks to our Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Sri. M.G. Ramachandran, for having instituted awards for talent promotion in musicians for creating new ragas and new musical forms and I also wish that the awards should be given wherever the talent is found. Performers of classical type of Carnatic music may try to compose melodies for film music based on the ragas of Carnatic music which will be a praiseworthy change and the films which are the most effective mass-media can introduce tunes based on Carnatic music in the songs and thereby improve the taste of the public by training their ears to appreciate classical music.

The music Sabhas, Press, Radio and T.V. play a major role in maintaining the standard of music. The Sabhas should encourage the deserving young artists but not by degrading the art by getting monetary help from them. Biased reviews with destructive criticism from the Press,

and sub-standard musical broadcasts from the Radio and T.V. should be averted. The listeners should attend in large numbers to the performances of budding artists to encourage them. Nowadays tape-recording of the performances of the artists when they perform in Sabhas and broadcast from AIR or T.V. has become a fashion. I believe that many people are commercialising these recordings. Those who want to commercialise or get profit out of that, should give a certain percentage of the profit to the artists also.

A few suggestions have been made for improving one's talent but apart from all human efforts, the grace of the Almighty is the vital factor for any achievement. I conclude by praying to Sadguru Sri Tyagaraja for the welfare of all musicians and Rasikas, and I dedicate this distinguished honour you have done me to my Guru parampara, to Sri Sadguru Tyagaraja, Manambuchavadi Sri Venkaatsubbiah, Sri Dakshinamoorthy Sastri, and my revered Guru Parupalli Sri Ramakrishnayya Pantulu.



THE SHAPES OF TUNES*

Hindu books, *namam*, tell us that the various musical tunes, Ragas and Ritis, have each a particular shape, and these books graphically describe them. For instance, the *Melha Ragas* is said to be a majestic figure seated on an elephant. The *Vasanta Raga* is described as a beautiful youth, decked with flowers. Another *namam* that a particular Raga or Riti, when accurately sung, produces several etheric vibrations which create the particular shape, said to be characteristic of it. Dr. H. S. has recently contributed, from the experience of his teacher, Mrs. A. W. H. Hoel, the noted critic of Voice Ragas, "Shrings into a simple instrument called *Eido-phone* which consists of a tube, a receiver and flexible membrane, inside which one can assume a determined constant shape, as a tree, dot, triangle, rectangle and so on. At the outset, the placed may be upon the flexible membrane and the air vibrations set up by the notes are transmitted there into definite geometric patterns. Amongst the most direct of these kinds, copulium dust being found particularly suitable. A reporter describing the shape of the notes produced them as resembling, in relation of geometry, perspective and lighting. Some spreads shadows and suggests, not only a wealth of deep-futing methodical design", such were what were first shown. Once when Mrs. Hoel was singing

a note, a daisy appeared and disappeared... She knows its precise inflections of the particular note that is a daisy, and it is made constant and definite by a strange method of coaxing an alteration of crescendo and diminuendo. After the audience had gazed enraptured at a series of daisies, some with succeeding rows of petals, delicately viewed, they were shown other notes and these were daisies of great beauty... exquisite form succeeded exquisite form on the screen. The flowers were followed by set-monsters, serpentine forms of swelling roundity, full of light and shade and details, feeding in miles of perspective.....

"While in France, Mme. Finlang's singing of a hymn to Virgin Mary 'O Eve Marium' brought out the form of Mary with child Jesus on her lap and again the singing of a hymn to Bhairava by a Bengali student of Banaras studying in France, gave rise to the formation of the figure of Bhairava with his vehicle, the dog."

Now this perception of the inherent power of sound, 'sabda' was applied with remarkable success by Indian adepts in Yoga who have reduced their knowledge and experience to an exact science. The tradition continues to this day and is kept alive by its votaries, especially in South India their number is still considerable."

* Swami Shivananda in his book "JAPA YOGA"

Deluge in December

(From our Madras Correspondent)

A VISITOR from another planet, were he to descend on Madras City in the last ten days of December, might well feel submerged in an ocean of the performing arts. On seeing the magnificent and stupendous programmes, in which artists of every calibre take part at the same time in different parts of the City, his first re-action would be to wonder why so much art has to be crammed within such a short period and how the true *rasika* can avoid missing the cream of music and dance if at all he could help.

In fact, this was precisely the reaction of no less a person than the Chief Minister, Mr. M. G. Ramchandran, who in one of his inaugural speeches in December last wondered why the programmes could not be staggered over a wider period. He got his answer too, when the president of the Sabha pointed out that the profusion of art was not really more than what the traffic can bear and that the public was really voracious of all the music that was cascaded on its head for a few days. Apparently, the true aesthete is quite prepared for the "winding bout of linked sweetness long drawn-out".

In one of its deadly aberrations, the north-east monsoon made it a very wet December-end, with icy winds blowing, but even this literal wet-blanket did not undermine the *aplomb* of the art-lover nor damp his enthusiasm.

The Music Academy, Madras

The pride of place must of course go to the Madras Music Academy, whose 32nd

Annual Conference (22-12-78 to 1-1-79) was inaugurated by the Chief Minister, Mr. M. G. Ramchandran and presided over by Dr. M. Balamurali Krishna. As Sri K. R. Sundaram Iyer, the President of the Academy, observed in his speech welcoming the Minister, the Academy was also concerned over the trends of the younger generation veering away from classical music towards pop. On December 31st 1978 the morning was set apart for a discussion among the members of the Experts Committee and the public-as to the best ways of interesting the teen, agers and even adults in the classical arts. The discussion was given a head-off start by Sri Lalgudi Jayaraman, the noted violin virtuoso.

It is worthy of being placed on record that Sri M. G. Ramchandran took great pains in his inaugural speech to highlight the greatness of classical music and dance and the intellectual and spiritual joy its pursuit brings to its votaries. He was not content to indulge in true clichés but delivered a really thought-provoking speech on the nature of Nadha Brahma and the achievements of the great composers in realising it.

Dr. Balamurali Krishna, for his part made a short speech, the burden of which was the need for opening up new vistas within classical bounds, which would be possible only if "tradition" is interpreted in a manner that does not strangle creativity and originality. (The full address of Dr. Balamurali Krishna is given elsewhere in this issue.)

HOW INDIAN BANK HELPS BUILD YOUR FORTUNE:

Indian Bank's Rs. 2-million diet for the potatoes of Kumarikadu.

In Kumarikadu (Kodai Hills) in Tamil Nadu, 1,000 acres of forest land are leased out by the Forest Department every year. Cultivators acquire the lands in an open auction, felling the trees and growing potatoes there.

And to these small landless farmers in Kumarikadu, potato cultivation meant a living. But to cultivate these lands they needed money—money they didn't have.

To Indian Bank, this was an opportunity to help these small farmers. Under its agriculture advances schemes, Indian Bank promptly advanced them a Rs. 2-million loan. This got them a livelihood.

Just another instance of Indian Bank providing timely help to a particular group. Yes, there are thousands whom Indian Bank has helped to make up and earn a livelihood—whether Harijan, tribal or ex-law breaker.

Through its 719 branches spread all over the country, Indian Bank has been constantly helping people to build their fortune.

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To one like your correspondent who has had ample opportunities of hearing music, the individual performances of the artists were mostly "fulitarian", with some rare exceptions, like those of K. V. Narayanaswamy, Maharajapuram Santhanam. Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer could not give his recital.

There were certainly some heart-warming performances in the early and middle afternoons, by some talented young ones. Mention must be made of the vocal recitals of C. K. Ramachandran, Shantha Subramaniam (Bombay), Sivakumar (Violin (Bombay), Prapanjam Sitaram (Flute), Neyyattinkara Vasudevan and Padma Narayanaswami, all of whom provided really vibrant music. We were also able to hear the sweet and scholarly vocal recital of Prof. S. Ramanathan who substituted for Semmangudi and whom we would not have had a chance to hear otherwise.

DISCUSSIONS AND PAPERS

Much of the pleasure of participating in the season was derived from the very interesting papers read at the morning sessions of the Music Academy (*open to all*) and the demonstrations by competent artists and savants. Some of the outstanding presentations were:

Mysoore Veena Seshanna's compositions. Kallidankurichi Vedaatha Bhagavathar's kritis, apurva ragas handled by Annamachariar (presented by Sri S. R. Janakiraman of Tirupathi University), Noorni Parameswara Bhagavathar's Natavarnam and kritis presented by N. P. Ramaswamy, special aspects of Muthuswami Dikshitar's compositions by B. Rajan Iyer, great varnams of the Tanjavur court (by Dr. S. Sita, Madras University), Desanamais and varna metrus by

Sandhyavandanam Srinivasa Rao); Pallavies of interesting and complex patterns (by Madurai Krishna Iyengar and T. V. Gopala Krishna—separately), suitability of the Western recorder to Karnatic Music (by V. Subramaniam of Bombay), Burmese music (by Dr. Robert Corbrias of U.S.A.), Electronic "thala" instrument (by Dr. P. E. Sankaranarayanan, C.S.I.R.), Voice culture (by Dr. S. A. K. Durga, Madras University and Gopalakrishna Bharathi's music in "Nandanar Charithram" (by Dr. S. Ramanathan), besides papers on Bhaktikhande and Paluskar by Sri I. S. Parthasarathy and on some typical *dhatas* of Sri Purandara by Sri S. Srinivasa Rao.

These sessions were extremely instructive and to the connoisseur, they did open some windows on many new aspects of music. But unfortunately, there was not enough time for a free discussion even among the cognoscenti, much less the lay feedback. General feeling was that this phase of the conference was *truly* the most constructive and useful and something should be done to spare more time for these lectures and demonstrations. If that came about, both Dr. V. Raghavan, the *supra*, and the president of the conference, would have had less need to apply the guillotine and leave a feeling of incompleteness and unfulfilment about the discussion in the minds of the audience.

The Indian Fine Arts Society

The 10th Music Conference and Festival of this very old and highly respected institution was quite a success. The chief justice, Sri Ramaprasad Rao, in his inaugural address, paid a deserved tribute to Sri V. Emburmanar Chetty, the President of the Society, for the

EFFICIENCY SHOULD BE OUR WATCHWORD



asian paints

missionary efforts taken by him and his committee all along to encourage new talent and to keep aloft the banner of the Society in the music world. The Chief Justice said that Sri Emberumanar qualified for the definition of "Gentleman" laid down by Cardinal Newman.

Smt. D. K. Pattammal who presided over the Festival, made a short but trenchant speech in which, after offering obeisance to her gurus like Sri Ambi Dikshitar, Sri T. L. Venkataramaier, Sri Vidyala Narasimhulu Naidu and others, she stressed the need for an all-engaging in untiring *sadhakam* and having also a fair acquaintance with the three languages, namely, Sanskrit, Telugu and Tamil so as to capture the true bhava of kritis. Smt. D. K. Pattammal made short shrift of the view that Karnatic music was on the decline. She also rightly disparaged the reported propagation of this view in the Western world, where actually Karnatak sangita is now better appreciated.

The Festival featured, besides D.K.P. herself, the top musicians of the day like Semmangudi, Srimathi M. S. Subbulakshimi, M.L.V. and also the star per-

formers in Bharatha Natyam and was a success despite the very inclement weather. A word of praise is due to Mr. N. Ramachandran, the Hony. Secretary and his colleagues for their solicitude to the patrons and public, during a trying time caused by the freaky weather.

Sri Krishna Gana Sabha (1954-1979)

This dynamic institution celebrated its Silver Jubilee by arranging a grand music and dance Festival featuring the top brass in the respective fields. To give more comfort to the members and the public, the Sabha improved the seating facilities and gave itself a face-lift which was as beautiful as it was welcome. Not the least of the highlights of the Festival was the glittering inaugural ceremony in which the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Sri M. G. Ramachandran, paid handsome and richly deserved tributes to the Sabha's progress and particularly to the brilliant contribution of Sri S. Yagnaraman, the self-effacing, unflappable and very efficient Secretary. The inaugural function was one of those enjoyable and unroutine things, what with CHO's humorous sallies, and Mr. A. P. Raman's witty remarks.



Mr. T. S. Parthasarathy at the Music Academy, along with Messrs. T. V. Rajagopalann, K. K. Sundaram Iyer, Dr. Balamurali Krishna and Dr. A. Raghavan

Character Study in Abhinaya

By

SRI KALANITHI NARAYANAN

In the contemporary classical dance of Tamil Nadu viz. Bharatha Natyam, its elements of Nrtta (body movements without any meaning to convey) and Nritya (dance which is body movements plus Bhava or portrayal of emotions) were adopted from the great Bharatha Sastra, which is the earliest literature in the Indian dance drama and music. Regarding the Nrtta aspect, most of the movements of the *angas* (limbs) have been prescribed in the Nrtta Sastra which have been adopted in Bharatha Natya to bring out the aesthetic beauty of the body lines through dance.

It is the Nritya aspect that Abhinaya features. This is the expression of varied emotions and moods through facial expression, *angas* and *upangas* and through *hastis* (hand gestures). Abhinaya can be brought out through four media, namely, Angika-movements of the body limbs and postures; Vachika-communication through speech; in Bharatha Natya through musical songs; Acharya-through the realm of external elements like costume, make-up, stage decor and lighting; Sanyasa-the most important, through emotions produced by the face of the artist.

MUSIC

Abhinaya will be most effective if modulated music, with control of the voice as per the mood and movement of the dance, is sung. Our great composers of padams have of course, tuned songs to suit the emotion in the lyrics of the songs. Hence if a little thought is given and pains taken in singing which is not very

difficult, you will achieve a glorious result, which is *suka layam*. In every padam, you can bring out this aspect.

ANGIKA

Again, in order to make Angika abhinaya effective, positioning and movement of the limbs should be perfect. More than being perfect, the positions should suit the character and mood. For e.g. while portraying sorrow, if the head and chin are held up and the body falls back on the foot, the posture will seem more like pride than sorrow even if the face puts on a sad expression. Again, if you are to point to an elder and say "You", *suchi hastha* or pointing your forefinger will seem inappropriate, but on the other hand if *pathaka hastha*, that is, pointing the whole palm is used with slightly drooped shoulders, it will bring out the necessary respect effectively. Hundreds of examples are there, but impossible to put them all in writing. But this aspect should be borne in mind while teaching.

Abhinaya devoid of Sathvika is like food without salt. The gestures, movements, positioning may all be perfect but if the mood is not expressed then it does not give the fullness to abhinaya. It can be compared to a dancing doll and not a human being.

CHARACTER STUDY

Now I come to the main topic of my article viz. Character study. To start

right from the basic, a careful study of the song in its entirety must be made and the main thread of thought must be understood and grasped. The main thought is the Sthayi bhava around which all the other emotions revolve. Keeping the Sthayi Bhava in mind, one must probe into the type of Character and make a thorough study of the song. The next step is this: since every song involves two or more characters they must only play a subtle and secondary part to the primary character. Once this has been worked out systematically, all importance and prominence should be given to the main character, whether it is the Nayaka or Nayika or Saki etc.

NAYIKA

For instance, a sequence in a Varnam deals with a Nayika or Heroine asking her friend not to make fuss but to go at once to her lord and bring him to her. Now the Nayika, meaning the heroine, being the main character, one should portray the Nayika telling the friend to go, ordering her, requesting her, chiding her, pleading with her and so on and could also imitate the fuss she is making and the reactions of the friends' behaviour. But to live the role of the one or friend by saying "I am busy, I have no time" etc. and thereby highlighting her character is not correct. One other example, while referring to the greatness of the Lover, one should not at once act the part of the lover to show valour, knowledge, beauty etc. but it should be suggested by the heroine herself. Once every character involved is portrayed or given prominence and highlighted and acted, out of it comes pure drama and no more of dance which is a suggestive art form.

SANCHARI BHAVA

Again another major point which unfortunately is being mis-interpreted is the term *sanchari bhava*. If this is analysed, the thoughts would all be suggestive; if not it will be guilty of having aided unnecessary drama. It actually should be expressed by various ideas and moods confining itself within the boundary of the song. For e.g. if the theme in the song deals with the Nayika waiting eagerly for her lover, ideas such as getting dressed up, getting ready the bed, milk, flowers, sandal paste etc are usually conveyed. But to elaborate it to the extent of showing the combing of every strand of hair, knotting of fallen hair and throwing it away sadly or walking all round the stage to pick flowers, smelling them, throwing them away etc. will all amount to drama and misuse of *sanchari bhava*.

NO DRAMA

Sanchari Bhava figures a lot in the Bhakthi themes where the main characters are Gods and Goddesses around whom a number of stories and interesting episodes have been woven in our past many. To take advantage of this and act in drama form, the whole story without a slightest chance is available in the song is a great temptation. But if one would remember the purpose of the song, which is to tell the story of the devotion of the devotees to the Lord, in the last charanam showing how Krishna entered and how he came to Yasoda comes to search for him and he was on his mouth and how Yasoda feeds him and finally how she sees the entire world in his mouth, if acted by a girl of above 15 years of age, it looks unbecoming. Instead, we can just narrate the story

in a line and subtly show all that the mother saw in the mouth of Krishna.

Again, while portraying the emotions of the characters of episodes, the whole personality of the persons should be well reviewed in its totality and the expression mood, movement etc must all ideally suit the character. For instance, if one were to portray Lord Rama in anger, to stand with blazing eyes, twitching of all face muscles, trembling of the body etc would all be overdone. Viewing his character as suppressed anger would be the ideal thing.

SRINGARA

The main essence of Padams is Sringara (love). The relationship between man and woman is Sringara, between mother and child is Vathsala Sringara. Sringara in its highest form is Bhakthi. Sringara is not always vulgar and a cheap exhibition

of love. So expressing it must be portrayed with dignity and with subtlety and suggestive emotions which will enhance the richness of the art and not lower its greatness. But it will be effective only if, as far as possible, the characters involved are dealt with as 'utama' personalities. So it is in the hands of the teacher and the artist to portray emotion with dignity and subtlety and create an atmosphere of aesthetic beauty which should elevate oneself and the audience.

Again, some songs can be dealt with and approached in more than one way, hence it is for the teacher and the artist to pick out the best way which will suit the artists' character and personality.

In conclusion, the purpose of this article is to focus attention on character study in songs which is very important for successful communication of the essence of Bharata Natya.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The beautiful picture of Sri Tyagaraja on the Front Cover was done by that superb artist Sri K. Madhavan. The block was kindly loaned to us by the Sri Tyagaraja Sangrahalaya Adhwath Samajam, Mysore.

The pictures of Sri Tyagaraja at p. 42 and of Srirangam Temple at p. 34 are from the beautiful collections of the late M. K. Rangaswami Iyengar, a well-known photographer who was an authority on temple architecture and a devout bhakta of Tyagaraja. Here, too, the blocks were kindly lent by the family of Sri M. K. R.

We express our thanks to both for assisting us in the above manner.

EDITOR.

Electronic Thalam (Beat) Generator*

By

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INTRODUCTION

A 'Thala Vadiyam' always functions as an accompaniment in India and Western music concerts. Normally, any percussion instrument could play this role. In Karnatik music concerts, Ghatam also fulfils this role. For a student learning any 'Thala Vadya', it is highly essential to have a periodic, steady time reference based on which he can practice different combinations of sounds. By words we mean the multi-syllable compounds like 'Tha ka ta', 'Dha ka dhru ma', 'Tha ka ta ka ri', etc. Any person having a fairly steady hand could provide this support while getting trained. Often it might become difficult to find a suitable person for providing this time reference. A simple device based on a clock mechanism could be thought of to provide this time reference. But, if this device has to indicate the 'Jathi', 'dhrutham' and 'anudhrutham' in the appropriate sequence depending upon the 'Thalam' and also to keep the time reference then the system design becomes complicated as it involves lot of mechanical logic. However, this problem could be solved without much difficulty electronically.

In our Laboratory, we took this problem of developing the Electronic Thalam Generator based on modern digital integrated circuits. The integrated circuits offer flexibility in designing a system which could conveniently be altered with the indications of 'Jathi', 'dhrutham' and 'anudhrutham' in the proper sequence for all 'thalas' normally used in Karnatik music practice. In addition, it offers compactness and hence miniaturization is possible. As a first step, we have developed an Electronic Beat Generator for Adhi Thalam. Performance results indicate that the design technique followed could be extended repeatedly for 'Roopaka Thalam', 'Kanda Chappa Thalam', 'Misa Chappa Thalam', etc. Further work is being done in this direction.

DESIGN BASIS:

No.	Thalam	N
1	Adhi	1001
2	Misra	1001
3	Roopaka	1001
4	Jampas	1001
5	Anudhrutham	1001
6	Faka	1001
7	Faka	1001

CONCEPT

Chart 1 shows the logic of the Adhi Thalam generator. The Adhi Thalam is known to be 1001 in binary. A single '0' denotes a 'Thattu' followed by the strong 'beat' denoted by '1'. The number of '0's in the 1001 is 2, which is the 'Jathi' of the 'Thalam'. A 'dhrutham' consists of a 'Thattu' followed by a 'Veechu', and an 'anudhrutham' is just a 'Thattu' only. From the above it follows that the 'dhrutham' can be characterised by this representation: 0101. Thus we have:

- (1) Function P denoting the 'Thattu'.
- (2) Function Q denoting the 'Veechu'.
- (3) Function R denoting the 'Veechu'.

On the basis of these functions, the Adhi Thalam can be represented as: P Q Q Q P R P R. This is the Adhi Thalam sequence.

P Q Q Q P R P R

The above sequence is used to generate the Adhi Thalam. The sequence of beats is 1001 and the Adhi Thalam is generated.

* Paper presented in the 2nd Annual Conference of The Madras Association, Madras, on 24-4 December 1974.

In the instrument that has been developed, to distinguish between the three functions viz., P , Q , and R , three different but harmonically related frequencies are employed. Whenever the function P occurs, a frequency f_1 which is internally generated is fed to a loud speaker system. Similarly, frequencies f_2 and f_3 , which are derived from f_1 , are fed to the loud speaker whenever functions Q and R occur. A special circuit enables ringing pure tones to be produced from f_1 , f_2 and f_3 for naturalness. In essence, when the power switch is made 'ON', one could hear three harmonically related, more or less pure tones occurring in a certain sequence depicting 'Adhi Thalam' as per the code pattern $P Q Q Q P R P R$.

An internal electronic clock controls the timing sequence. Due to this, the time interval between two beats within 'lagu', between 'lagu' and 'dhrutham' within 'dhrutham' and between 'dhrutham' and 'lagu' is maintained constant. Since frequency stability of the internal clock is comparatively high of the order of 10^4 , the time interval between beats essentially remains constant. However, in the instrument this time interval can be set with a front panel control. Once set in this fashion it remains constant till the next setting is done. An extra facility has been introduced for providing 'Double Kalai' by the use of a front panel switch. In the present instrument, the frequency range for f_1 is between 1000 Hz and 1500 Hz. This, however, could be changed depending upon the requirement. To a certain extent this frequency control enables the artist (*student*) to time the instrument to the sound generated when the black portion (*Karnam*) of the *Mrudhangam* is struck with the finger.

The time interval between two consecutive beats in the normal mode could be varied from

about 0.5 sec. to 3.0 secs. This gets doubled in the 'Double Kalai' mode of operation. In addition to the audio facility provided visual indication is also provided by the use of three light emitting diodes (LED). With this, we feel that the student of 'Thala Vadiya' could now identify the number of 'aksharas' elapsed in a cycle in terms of 'Lagu' and 'dhrutham'. With this trainer, it is hoped that it would be possible for the student to get himself self-trained in playing various 'Nadais' in a 'Thalam', without the help of another person to provide the basic time reference.

CONCLUSIONS

To summarise, we feel that the digital design employed in the present development of an Electronic Adhi Thalam Generator could be extended to accommodate other popularly used 'Thalas'. The unit so fabricated could be compact with minimum number of controls. The required 'Thalam' could be selected with the help of a front panel switch. We intend introducing one more facility for identifying the beginning of the 'Thala cycle'. We could also introduce a numerical display for indicating the number of 'Aksharas' elapsed in a 'Thala cycle'.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to offer our sincere thanks to Shri R. Ramesh for playing *Mrudhangam* to day during the demonstration of this instrument. We also acknowledge the interest shown by Shri N. B. Subramaniam of Messrs. Unique Electronics, in this development work. But for his initiative, our Laboratory would not have taken up this work. Lastly, our thanks to the Director, CEEERI, for showing considerable interest in this work.

BACK COPIES

Enquiries are being received from some new subscribers about the availability of back issues of 'SHANMUKHA'. A few of them are available and will be supplied on receipt of specific requests, accompanied by the relevant remittance. The price of each copy is Rupee One. Postage extra.

PUBLISHERS.

SPURIOUS COMPOSITIONS

A rash of new Kritis purporting to be compositions of Muthuswami Dikshitar has broken out in the concert halls of Madras. Competent musico-logists and knowledgeable critics alike have entered a caveat against this tendency which is more pronounced among the younger musicians who presumably want to cash in on the Dikshitar wave that set in in the Centenary year.

The following letter from a distinguished scholar appeared in the "Hindu" of 15-9-78, which we gladly publish.—Ed.

"Sir, there appeared in 'The Hindu' of August 18 an article by N.M.N. making out that some spurious compositions foisted on Sri Muthuswami Dikshitar were appearing in the field and tarnishing his image. May I point out a few examples? The sahitya of 'Rangapuravahara' cannot be genuinely Dikshitar's. The *purvardha* and *uttarardha* of the pallavi as well as the *anupallavi* have no *yati*. Still sadder, the entire sahitya of the charana, except the madhyamakala sahitya, has neither *yati* nor *deviyakshara prasa*. The madhyamakala sahitya has no bearing on the previous *padas* of the sahitya of the charana.

The coincidence of the *deviyakshara prasa* between the pallavi and the *anupallavi*, as well as between the *padas* of the charana, coupled with the *yati* between their *purvardhas* and *uttarardhas*, is a distinctive essential and compulsory feature in the lakshana of the sahitya of the kriti, as evolved down the last two centuries and more. And Muthuswami Dikshitar, in particular, has meticulously adhered to and incorporated these indispensable features in all his compositions. For example, his 'Srinathadhi', his very first kriti, is replete with all the above lakshanas.

Another defective composition is 'Sri Satyanarayanam' wherein the sahitya of the pallavi has neither *yati* nor *prasa* in its *purva* and *uttarardhas*. Nor has the madhyamakala sahitya at the end of the pallavi any bearing on the pallavi at all. Even within that madhyamakala sahitya, the *purvardha* and the *uttarardha* suffer from a sad inequality. The *uttarardha* of charana sahitya has no bearing on the *purvardha*. The concluding madhyamakala sahitya at the end of the charana has also no bearing on the previous *padas* of the charana. And within itself the madhyamakala sahitya has no *yati* or *prasa*. Can any of these discrepancies be pointed out in 'Sri Rajagopala' or 'Kamalambam bhajare' or 'Vatapiganapati'?

Further, in point of the sense content of the sahityas of his kritis, the pallavi, *anupallavi* and charana always bear the inter-relationship of the 'sutra-vritti and-bhashya.' For instance, the kritis 'Sri Varalakshmi namastubhiyam' and 'Sri Subrahmanyaya namaste' eloquently bear out the above beautiful characteristics; whereas the *anupallavi* and charana of the kriti 'Rangapuravahara' do not substantiate the theme of the pallavi. On the contrary the sahitya of the *anupallavi* and charana only digresses without any elaboration of Sri Ranganatha and/or Sriranga kshetra."

P. K. RAJAGOPALA AIYAR, Madras.

தியாகராஜரின் நகைச்சுவை

By

R. வேணுகோபால்

யமலோகத்திலே ஒரு பயங்கர அமைதி. எதையோ பறி கொடுத்துப் போல் எல்லோரும் ஆக்கம் கொண்டாடிச் கொண்டிருந்தார்கள். யம கிங்கரர்கள் யமன் தன் முன்விலையிலே அழைத்து 'உங்களுடைய கோலா கலத்துக்கெல்லாம் முடிவு காலம் வந்து விட்டது.' என்று கூறிவிட்டு பலத்த யோசனையிலே ஆழ்ந்து விட்டான். விஷயம் இதுதான். நல்லவர்களெல்லாம் ஸத் பஜனையிலே சடுபட ஆரம்பித்துவிட்டார்களாம். இதைக் கண்டதும் தன் வேலைக்கு ஆபத்து வந்து விட்டதே என்று யமனுக்குப் பயம் ஏற்பட்டுச் சித்தனே சிலே ஆழ்ந்து விட்டானாம்.

யமனைப் பார்த்து கை கொட்டிச் சிரிப்பதுடன் அடங்க வில்லை. ஸ்வாமிகளின் நகைச்சுவை. ஸ்ரீ ராமனிடமே தஞ்சா லுச் பானியிலே பொடி வைத்துப் பேசுகிறார் கிரணுவனி சீர்த்தனையிலே.



யமன் கதி

அவனுக்குச் சட்டென்று ஒரு யோசனை. தல்வழி தெரியாமல் சிரியும் மாந்தர்கள் விரைவது இருக்க மாட்டார்கள். அவர்களையாவது பாசக் கயிறிலே வளைத்துப் போட்டால் போதும் என்று. அவனுனுடைய நுரிஷ்டம் அவர்களும் தியாக ராஜ ஸ்வாமியின் இவய நாமக் கீர்த் தனைகளைப் பாட ஆரம்பித்து விட்டிருக்கிறார்கள். யமனுடைய கதி அதோ கதி இருக்க.

‘நாகி தெவியலேக திரிகே
வாரணே சலு நண்டே
லாசமலி த்யாகராஜு
ஸங்கீர்த்தனா பாடேரஸக
சிந்தில்தூர் ஈடே யமுடு’

இந்தக் கற்பனை தியாகராஜஸ்வாமியின் முகாசி ராகத் கீர்த்தனையாகிய ‘சிந்தில தூர் ஈடே யமுடு’ என்பதில் இடம் பெறுகிறது.

‘நா பநுலண்டே யீ
பராசு நீ கௌர ராம’

ஏன் அலட்சியம்?

என் காரியம் என்றால் மட்டும் உனக் கேள் இந்த அலட்சியம்? சபரிக்கு முக்தி யளித்தாயே, நான் என்ன சபரியைப் போல் உனக்கு எச்சில் உணவையா கொடுத்தேன்? குறையை ஆட்கொண்டாயே,

நான் என்ன குறையைப் போல் உனக்குத் தரையிலே இலையைப் பரப்பியா படுக்கை அமைத்தேன் என்று வாழைப் பழத்திலே கணி ஏற்றுகிறார்:

‘புரான சபரியொலங்கி யடுளே
புறிஞ்சுகொந் சேஷமா ராம
தராதுலுர குறாநிலலெ பத்ர
தல்ப மொளர்ச்சிதிரா’

இது ‘பராசு நீகலே’ என்கிற கீர்த்தனத்திலே,

தாக்குதல்

அடுத்து ‘ஸீதாநாயக’ என்கிற ரீதி கொள்கை கீர்த்தனையிலே பயங்கரமான தாக்குதலே நடக்கிறது ஸ்ரீ ராமன்மீது.

‘அங்கலாப்ப யூ-சி ரங்கபுரான செ
லங்கக பண்டிதிலோ’

பக்தர்களின் அங்கலாப்பைப் பார்த்து நதி சூழ்ந்த ஸ்ரீரங்க சேஷத்திரத்தில் பள்ளி கொண்டாயோ?

‘பக்துல கரிகோத படலேக
கிரிகை பெக்கு கொண்டுவலோ’

பக்தர்களின் தொந்தரவு பொறுக்க முடியாமல் மலை மீது ஏறி உட்கார்ந்து கொண்டாயோ?

‘ஆல மிஞ்சி நிந் நாக ஜோரோ
கீசல ஜோரிதிலோ’

மனித பக்தர்களிடம் சேர்த்தால் விட மாட்டார்கள் என்று தான் குரங்குக் கூட்டத்தைச் சேர்த்ததைத்தாயோ?

என்று இந்த ரீதியிலே ஸ்ரீ ராமருடைய பராமுகத்துக்கு உள் நோக்கமே தந்திக் கிறார்.

மித்ர பேதம்

அடுத்து ஸ்ரீராமருக்கும் அவருடைய பரிவாரங்களுக்கும் இடையே சிண்டு முடித்துவிடும் மித்ரபேதம்:

‘சீது பரிவாருலெல்ல ஒகிபோதா
ஜேஸேவாரலு காசே’

உன்னுடைய பரிவாரங்களெல்லாம் உனக்கு நல்ல யோசனை சொல்பவர்கள் தானா?

‘கரஜா ஸீயாநதி விரிலேக சலேடே
ககாநகிலிலு பறாதுரம் பரிநாடோ’

கருடன் உன் ஆணையை மதிக்காமல் வேலை திறுத்தும் செய்து விட்டானா? விண்ணுலகத்துக்கும் பூவோகத்துக்கும் தூரம் அதிகம், ஆகவே உன்னை அங்கு தூக்கிச் செவ்வ என்று ஆகாது என்று உரைத்துவிட்டானா?

இது ‘நகு மோசு’ என்ற ஆபேரி கீர்த்தனையிலே,

இதே ரீதியிலே ‘புக்துல காது’ என்ற கீர்த்தனையிலே,

‘பவஸுதுடு வத்தரி லீ
பதலு பட்டு கொளெனோ’

அனுமன் தீ போக வேண்டாம் என்று சொல்லி உன் பாதங்களைத் தன் கரங்களால் கெட்டியாகப் பிடித்துக் கொண்டானோ? என்று குற்றம் சாட்டுகிறார். இந்தக் கீர்த்தனையிலே இன்னும் கொஞ்சம் முன்னேறி வெளிப்பலையாகவே

‘முறு வெலவெ பக்துலகே லீ சத்திய
லெலவை போவெனோ.

வரித்த ஸீதை வனவாசம் போகும்படி ஆயிற்று. உன்னை விரும்பிய சூர்ப்பனகை மூக்கை இழந்தாள்.

இதற்கெல்லாம் ஸ்ரீராமன் மறிந்து
கொடுக்காமல் போகவே அத்தயந்த விரக்
தியான நிலை. அந்த நிலையிலும் நம்
மிதழ்களிலே முறுவலை வரவழைக்கும்
அதே நையான்டி.

உன்னை விரும்பி, அன்பு மன்னிடம்
ககத்தை யாசித்தவர்களிலே யார்
அந்த ககத்தைப் பெற்றார்கள்? உன்னை

காவிரித் தண்ணீருக்கும் நகைச்
கலைக்கும் ஆழ்ந்த உறவு உண்டு
என்பார்கள். இதற்குத் தியாகராஜ
ஸ்வாமிகளும் கூட விதி விலக்கல்ல என்று
உணர்கிறோம்.



“பூலோக வைகுண்ட மிதியாதி”

— 'ஒரங்கசாயி'



Courtesy: M. K. RANGASWAMI IYENGAR TRUST, MADRAS-19

க்ருகி

பல்லவி சேஷ்யபார்

ஸரிகாபதிஸ் — ஸ்நிபா கரிஸ. சிம்மேந்திரமத்யமத்திஸ் ஸன்யம்.

பய்வுகள்

1. என்-த	மா	பாமா	பா;	நீபா;	மா	பா	நீ;	ஸா	நீ பா மா கா நீ ஸா
என்-த	வி	வி	வி	வி	வி	எ	வ	நி	மோர வி இ து ரா
என்-த	மா	மா	மா	மா	மா	பாநீ	ஸா	நிஸா	do
என்-த	வி	வி	வி	வி	வி	எ	வ	நி	..
என்-த	மா	மா	மா	மா	மா	பதில்கா	காநீ	ஸா	..
என்-த	வி	வி	வி	வி	வி	எ-வ	நி	தோ..	கநிஸ்தபம
என்-த	மா	மா	மா	மா	மா	நீ. பா;	:	:	மோ-ர-வி
என்-த	வி	வி	வி	வி	வி	வி	:	:	நி ப மக நில
என்-த	மா	மா	மா	மா	மா	து ரா	:	:	இ து. ரா-

அனுபல்லவி

[illegible]

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